

FRIDAY,
JANUARY, 18,
2008

FLY GLOBAL MUSIC
CULTURE

EUROPE: FEATURES

FANFARE CIOCARLIA - THE SPEED BRASS EXPRESS

**BALKAN MUSIC
CONNOISSEUR JILL
SELLNER FINDS OUT
FROM BAND MEMBERS
IONITA NICOLAE AND
COSTICA TRIFAN WHAT
KEEPS THEM GOING
WITH SUCH
EXUBERANCE AFTER
THE DEATH OF THEIR
BELOVED PATRIARCH,
IOAN IVANCEA**



Pop a *Fanfare Ciocărlia* CD on at a party, and see what happens. It is frenetic Gypsy brass which even the most repressed soul could not help but go a bit wild to. *Ciocărlia* are without a doubt the most famous and busiest Romanian wedding bands with over 100 gigs a year. But they are also arguably also the best.

“Nobody paid attention anymore to our village music and our kids threw away a hundred-year-old tradition. To be honest so did we”

After the revolution in 1990, like most bands in Romania, the group abandoned their Romani musical traditions due to popular demand for Western pop to be played at weddings. Their ‘discovery’ in 1995 by German producer Henry Ernst changed their lives and Romania’s musical landscape forever. “Nobody paid attention

anymore to our village music and our kids threw away a hundred-year-old tradition. To be honest so did we. But then one day Henry visited our village by chance and asked for our music and there our story started. Now we have more than five brass bands in our village and the youngsters are studying our old songs.”

Ciocărlia are proud of this legacy, as they should be, and they have been rewarded with a huge global fan base, incredibly successful CD sales and a Radio BBC World Music Award in 2006. But it is ‘making a good party’ that brings them the most joy. They’ve played to a

crowd of 80,000 at the Hollywood Bowl and Danny Elfman's private birthday party, and though such gigs are notable, the band is just pleased to bring a smile to faces of the masses. "In fact we consider each of our concerts a unique event regardless of the location, size, weather or numbers. We like to make a party and enjoy making people happy and feeling good with our music!"

<p>"Ten years touring all together and then suddenly one person is missing... It is a pity he left us. But that's the way of life. We will keep him in our memories. But musically there are no changes since he passed away."</p>	<p>While not terribly enthusiastic about the remixed version of Gypsy music which has also become hugely popular in the last couple of years, the band accepts it is sure to exist. Perhaps surprisingly they are more keen on Romanian Manele, "Turkish sounding pop music with a strong gypsy influence." Musical purists cringe even at the thought of these badly-produced synth love songs but I suppose everyone needs to clear their musical palate occasionally. "But we listen to classical, rock and folk music as well. We like all music which sounds good in our ears."</p>
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After the passing of their musical leader Ioan Ivancea in 2006, the remaining 11 players continue to bring their mad genius sound to the world without hesitation. "Of course it has affected the band. Ten years touring all together and then suddenly one person is missing. He was the senior chief of our ensemble. We all learned a lot from him. He was teaching us the roots of our music. It is a pity he left us. But that's the way of life. We will keep him in our memories. But musically there are no changes since he passed away."

I am told they are absolutely the best Gypsy band live. Check them out as they tour the UK including their first ever appearance in Scotland at the Celtic Connections Festival 2008.

JANUARY UK TOUR 2008

- 24/01 Glasgow — The Old Fruit Market — The Celtic Connections festival
- 25/01 Gateshead — The Sage
- 26/01 Manchester — The Bruntwood Theatre
- 28/01 Doncaster — Priory Methodist Church
- 29/01 London — The Old Bailey

Link: [Fanfare Ciocarlia](#)